



The Faithful Steward

A Newsletter of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America

The New Martyr's Widow

Written by Alexandros Papadiamantis
Translated by Athena Antonopoulos

The sun had already set and it was becoming dusk. Yiannis Moutzouris and his little donkey, loaded with small sticks and kindling, were returning home from the field. From the great sandy shore which stretched by the seaside, Yiannis had come up Cemetery Hill, which was covered with white stone crosses, on the west side of the small village. He walked alongside the low stone wall built around the graves at the behest of the town officials.

The moon had been shining since early evening. Inside the low wall, Uncle Yiannis saw a shadow standing over a tomb. At times, it bent forward, as if doing prostrations or digging the bitter, moldy soil. Yiannis became perplexed. He stood for a moment and looked while his little donkey proceeded a few steps. Then he called out the usual command for 'stay,' which it was accustomed to obeying. The animal stopped, and Yiannis, driven by curiosity, hastened to the cemetery gate.

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Alexandros Papadiamantis

It had not been even three years since they had built that stone wall, and the one side of the gate had already become unhinged from its place and had fallen down. Yiannis Moutzouris went in, made his cross in front of the crosses and the graves. With his *tsarouhia* [peasant's shoes] tightly wound around his ankles and his usual light step, he drew closer to the man he had seen. The latter, unsuspecting and absorbed in his own thoughts, continued to do his cross and make prostrations on the ground above the dead buried in the grave. When Uncle Yiannis moved closer, he saw that the grave above which the stranger stood appeared in the light of the moon to be newly-dug, and the man seemed to be dressed in

monk's attire. He wore a *rasso* but not a priest's hat, only a black *skoufia*. Yiannis called out to him.

"Hey! What are you doing here?"

After saying this, he drew closer. The stranger was an old man with a white beard, unknown to Yiannis.

The man stood up, looked at him and did not answer, but stopped the prostrations.

The villager said "Good evening" to him, and then continued:

"I've never seen you before. Are you perhaps from the Monastery up there? How is it that you came here?"

The man said in a whisper:

"Eh, just because... don't ask!"

And he fell silent. Yiannis looked at the newly-dug grave. It did not have a white stone at the head, like the stones decorating all the other graves; only a quickly assembled wooden Cross on the side where the head of the deceased was.

"This grave must be Deaf Old-Chryse's, whom they buried today. I was not here during the day, but I learned last night that she passed away. Is it hers, or don't you know?"

"Yes," said the stranger.

"Did you know her?"

The stranger shook his head hesitantly, as if wanting to say both yes and no.

Uncle Yiannis paused, pondering for a moment, and then said:

"Over there, near the road is my hut. You see over there, at Antóni Botsaris', my neighbor's tavern? I will unload the animal in the yard, and then go to the tavern for a while to have a little drink of *rakí* and to rest. If you want, Father, come, let me treat you, and let's have a talk. I'll tell you what I know about the deceased one, God rest her soul, the one they buried here today... If you want to, tell me whatever you know... Otherwise do not speak; I am not forcing you."

A quarter of an hour later, Uncle Yiannis Moutzouris was drinking his *rakí* at Antónis Botsaris' tavern. The enigmatic old man in monk's clothes came also.

The two men sat on top of two logs upended on the ground; they sat there, having a drink together. A big unpolished slab of stone served as a table.

"Now then," Uncle Yiannis began, after taking the first sip, "did you know Old Chrysé?"

"I knew her husband for a little while," the stranger said with hesitation.

"Which one out of them all? Because she had three husbands."

"The first one and the best... God have mercy on my soul! I am a great sinner!"

And his voice sounded like a lament. He sighed deeply.

"Tell me what is going on, Father? I'm not understanding you," Uncle Yiannis said again.

"Tell me first what you know," said the old stranger. Yiannis swallowed a second sip of *rakí* and said:

"But I am very confused... After all, I don't know who you are and how you came here... You didn't tell me. Over at the Monastery of the Annunciation, is that where you live? Of course, you are not from our parts around here. What is your relationship with the dead woman and where... and when?..."

The stranger thought for a while and replied:

"Didn't you yourself say, 'I'll tell you what I know, and if you want to, tell me what you know, otherwise don't speak, I'm not forcing you?' Then again that which I can say to you is only a part of the whole conversation which I ought to have with a Spiritual Father... I told you, I am a sinful man."

"And haven't you already confessed?"

"Many times. But my conscience still bothers me.

My mind finds no rest. This is something that cannot be forgotten."

"Really?" Yiannis said, and he felt something like fear over this description that the stranger was giving of himself.

"Really!" said the stranger. "And that which I can say, you do not know; and if I do tell you, I will say it to you just so that I can lighten my conscience;... while that which you are able to tell me, I may know better than you do. Whether or not you say it to me, I have no curiosity. Only if you do tell me, by listening to you, the desire to say my part also will come to me..."

Yiannis repeated the stranger's words:

"You said that what I can tell you, you already know?"

"Yes," said the stranger without hesitation. "That is, the manner by which the deceased one's first husband was lost in Constantinople... whom the Turks hanged unjustly... and whose bones became fragrant! Ah, God have mercy on my soul!"

And the stranger's voice trembled.

Yiannis said, "Then let's order a second glass of *rakí*." He called the tavern keeper, and instructed him to bring them two more glasses of *rakí*. As he drank, he started narrating what he had heard from his older fellow-villagers.

In the afternoon of that day, Old Chrysé the Deaf had been buried at the small cemetery of the village. She had been widowed three times. Her first husband was the young sailor Kostantís of Matárona, whom the Turks had hanged in Constantinople at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a few years before the Greek Revolution. The wedding had taken place one year before. Chrysé had given birth to a little girl. Her husband, at the beginning of spring, set out, as usual, on his father's ship, of which he was the captain, and went to Constantinople where he sold wines and oils.

During those days in Constantinople's harbor, many Greek ships and caiques would dock from the islands and from the Aegean; among the many caiques which sold oils, olives, *rakí*, figs, raisins and other products to the Turks, a fight had broken out over money between Christian sellers and Moslem buyers, and a Greek sailor had struck a Turk with an oar and killed him.

When the authorities learned of the murder, and after they had dredged up the Turk's corpse from the

sea floor, they arrested five or six of the Greek sailors as suspects. Among them was Kostantís.

No one wanted to confess that they had done it, but no one was eager to bear witness against another either, or to accuse another as guilty. Just two of the ones questioned said that the murder had taken place near the spot where Matárona's boat was docked; they also said that Captain Kostantís was always on the boat, and would come on land only on Sunday, when he wanted to go to church, or on Saturday night, when he had to take care of the bills.

Then the Turks held Kostantís of Matárona as a suspect, while they let the others go free.

They questioned Kostantís by torture.

"Infidel! Dog! Did you kill him?"

"No, judge. On my word!"

"No? Then who killed him?"

"I did not see."

"The fight happened close to your caique."

"I don't know whether or not it was close. It was dark and late at night. I was sleeping. I only heard voices. I heard our dog barking. I was startled. I woke up and went out on the deck. I looked, but saw not a soul. In the morning, I learned that there was a murderer."

"And your companions?"

"My companions were already questioned by you, Judge Sir. Your honor knows what they said."

Matáronas' two companions, who temporarily made up the entire crew of the ship while it was docked at the harbor, had been arrested together with the other suspects and had been released. They, too, had testified that they were sleeping and had seen nothing.

The Turkish judge regretted having released them and he ordered their arrest again. He brought them face to face with their captain. The men testified under oath that they had seen nothing. The judge let them go again a second time. After their release, Kostantís' interrogation became even more brutal.

"So then," said the judge, "the one 'does not know,' the other 'saw nothing.' Who, then, killed him? Maybe the Moslem killed himself?"

"I am taking an oath on my Faith, I am innocent," said Kostantís.

"What is he taking an oath on his faith for?" spoke out an elderly Turk who was in attendance at the trial. "His faith is false."

"No! It is true!" Kostantís replied spontaneously and with courage.

These words irritated the Turks. They cursed the young Christian, calling him, "Son of a dog!" Then they sent him to the holding cell in the damp, dark cellar, where they tortured him with many lashes of the whip. After a few hours, they sent for him again and led him in front of the *mullah* [chief judge].

Again, there began the double torture of interrogation by both deeds and words. They twisted the prisoner's two arms behind his back. The handsome, rosy-cheeked young man with the blond mustache suffered tremendously, and the pupils of his eyes seemed ready to jump out of their sockets.

"Infidel! Pig! Will you confess? You killed him."

"I am telling you the truth, I am innocent."

"Then, since he is telling the truth and he is innocent," said the same elderly Turk who had been present at the trial, "let him become a Moslem so we can believe him."

"Will you become a Moslem?"

"No!"

"I will hang you!"

The young man momentarily seemed to waver.

"Will you?"

Kostantís kept silence.

"You will hang!"

"So be it!"

And again:

"Will you become a Moslem?"

"No!"

"Drag him to the gallows," the chief judge screamed. The elderly Turk clapped his hands together.

They brought him to the place of execution. They readied the gallows.

"You killed the man!"

"No!"

"Become a Moslem!"

"Lord Jesus Christ!...."

Two or three Turks with wide turbans, who stood there at that God-forsaken place, began advising the condemned man:

"Come to the true faith, man; save yourself. Don't you feel pity for your youth?"

"Handsome Greek, become a Moslem! Don't you have parents? Don't you feel sorry for your mother?"

"Are you married? Don't you feel sorry for your children?"

Kostantís was starting to waver again. His voice caught in his throat.

"Will you become a Moslem? Have you changed your mind?"

"No! I'm not condemning the soul of my godfather who baptized me."

The executioner pulled the rope.

"Will you become a Moslem?"

"Your last hour!"

"No! I'm not condemning my godfather!"

The executioner prepared the noose.

"Go to Hades then, you infidel!"

"Remember me, O Lord!..."

After a few minutes, the young man's body was convulsing as it hung from the gallows.

Three years later, the sailors, chiefly from Rhodes, whose ship was next to Matárona's ship at the dock in Constantinople, and who knew that young Captain Kostantís was innocent, had learned in time exactly where his body was buried. So they went secretly to the cemetery of the condemned man to exhume his body. Kostantís' bones were golden and fragrant with the smell of roses and basil. The Rhodians took them on their ship and brought them to their hometown, where they placed them in the altar of a country chapel, under the Holy Table.

In Kostantís' village, his relatives learned after some time that the "Turks hanged him unjustly in Constantinople."

Young Chrysé, the newly-wed, with her baby in her arms, wept for her husband, wore black, but two years later she forgot him and contracted a second marriage.

A few days after the wedding she had a dream. Her first husband, Kostantís, appeared in her dream, with the noose around his neck.

"Chrysé, have you forgotten me?"

Chrysé woke up with a fever and a ringing in one ear. She was expecting. She gave birth with pain and affliction. As soon as the infant was born, the first child—Kostantís' child—died.

After a little while, her second husband also died.

Chrysé went deaf in one ear.

Chrysé mourned her second husband also. Shortly after that, her child from her second marriage died too. After three years, Chrysé forgot both the dream and the second husband and her two children. But she was still young, barely thirty years old. The womenfolk among her kinsmen persuaded her to marry for the third time. A few days after the third marriage, she saw Kostantís in her dream again, this time with a mark like a deep furrow around his neck.

"Chrysé, do you keep forgetting me?"

Chrysé woke up with a fever and a ringing in the other ear, the healthy one. A little time later her third husband died also, and Chrysé became deaf in both ears.

This Old-Chrysé the Deaf, as everyone called her, had been buried that day; and this is the story that Yiannis Moutzouris narrated to the elderly stranger, whom he had found praying at her grave.

He listened eagerly to the narrative from beginning to end. Then he drank the last drop of *rakí* and said.

"That's how it happened. Exactly as you said it."

"So then, you knew everything?"

"Yes, plus one more thing."

"If you want to, tell me: What is this one more thing?"

"It's what is missing from the story."

"What is missing?"

"The fact about who had killed the Turk and hid and saved himself...."

And with these words, the stranger stood up to leave.

Yiannis' eyes and mouth opened wide.

"And that one is *you!*"

The stranger left quickly and, after an instant, he was nowhere to be seen.

As a final echo, the breeze carried these words to Yiannis' ears:

"*God have mercy on my sin!*"

Adamantios Korais 1748–1833

Teacher of the Hellenes

Our religion, [the Holy Orthodox Faith] which is above reason (divinely revealed), does not resemble the rational sciences and arts. These, being the work of the *human* mind, are perfected with the progress of time, insofar as its rational power is perfected by philosophy. *Our religion, the work of God*, is, on the contrary, corrupted, insofar as it is separated in time from its first proclamation, if its leaders do not take care to guard it intact, as a treasure entrusted to them by its Author.

Korais, *Advice of Three Bishops*, London 1820, pp. xv-xvi.
Quoted in *Ecumenism Examined* by Constantine Cavarnos. 1996.



**LENTEN ENCYCLICAL
of
His Eminence, Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston**

My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

At our Clergy Synaxis in October last year, I had the opportunity to read a translation of a long treatise by Saint Nectarius of Pentapolis on the subject of fasting. Saint Nectarius' study quotes innumerable ancient sources on this matter, and thereby gives us an excellent overview of how we came to have the fasting rules that we have inherited today. Thanks in large part to the efforts of one young mother, a member of the Cathedral parish of St. Mark of Ephesus in Boston, we now have this study of Saint Nectarius in English.

From this treatise by Saint Nectarius, one thing becomes evident immediately: there was a great deal of variety in the length and nature of the fasts that the early Christians kept. This information alone is extremely important, for it serves us well to understand the true nature of the fasts.

Citing many ancient sources, the Saint tells us, for example, that the fast we keep on Wednesdays and Fridays began in the very first century, when the Apostles were still living. We learn also why there is a discrepancy in *The Holy Rudder* regarding the date on which the stricter part of the Nativity fast begins. The Saint tells us, in addition, that from the very time of their conversion to the Orthodox Christian Faith, the Slavic peoples were permitted certain *economias* in the fasting rules because they lived predominantly in the northern, colder latitudes. For the same reason, we learn from our Slavic brethren that the Russian peoples, for example, have a “fasting oil” [i.e. the light vegetable or sunflower oils] as opposed to “non-fasting oil” [olive oil, which is richer and heavier]. We learn also how and why the monastic rules of fasting differ from the fasting rules for the laypeople, and how and why the former came, in many cases, to influence the latter.

Another important work, translated from the Russian language by another young mother, in this instance, a member of the parish of Saint Anna's in Boston, shows us the historical unity of spirit that always existed between the monastics and the laypeople, and how the first served as a light for the second. This work in Russian was written by the holy hieromartyr Hilarion Troitsky in 1915, just ten years after Saint Nectarius wrote his own extensive work on fasting.

It is no coincidence, my beloved, that monasticism began to flourish in the Church just as the great persecutions of the early centuries were beginning to subside. Christianity, from its very inception, was always a heroic faith, requiring great spiritual valor from its children. The very fact that you were a Christian in those early years meant, almost automatically, that you were considered an enemy of the Roman state,

and hence, subject to persecution and a cruel death. As that danger receded, monasticism began to grow as a natural consequence, since the Christians—at that time, at least—understood very well that they were in, but not of, the world. As the Gospel warns: The friendship of the world [i.e., the passions] is enmity with God. At your holy baptism, when you spit upon the devil and all his works, you are declaring war. In such a war, no quarter is given. However, as St. Leo, the Pope of Rome, points out, the respite that the Christians received when the persecutions ended had its own danger: laxity.

It was with such an understanding that the monastics took up their battle against the passions that wage war against us—both the passions within and those around us—and it was with such an understanding that the laypeople who wanted to remain true to their baptismal vows sought to follow in the footsteps of the monastics.

In other words, the spiritual warfare continued unabated. Although one enemy—the persecutors—had been subdued, at least temporarily, many other foes—the soul's passions—continued their warfare against us. Hence, as the monastics honed their skills in spiritual combat, the laypeople followed suit. The prayers, the vigils, the hymnography, all flourished as an expression of this piety and this spiritual struggle. The period of the fasts likewise expanded and became more and more uniform—although variances in this discipline remain to this very day. The point here, however, is that all this growth in the varied expressions of the Church's piety came to pass *because of the need the Christians felt to strengthen their spiritual armament for their struggle against the destructive passions*. Have persecutions ceased? Then, they reasoned, we will use the truce on this *exterior* front to fortify and re-invigorate our battle against our *interior* enemies.

With the help of God, it is our intention to publish in *The True Vine* the above-mentioned works by Saint Nectarius of Pentapolis and Saint Hilarion Troitsky. Both these treatises are works of great scholarship on the one hand, and of many sublime spiritual insights on the other. Also, in the 1994 Lenten Encyclical to our faithful, many thoughts were expressed there which complement what is written here.* The ascetical, spiritually heroic character of Christianity is a basic and fundamental part of our Faith. Let us espouse the spiritual armament which our Church offers us, even as a drowning man welcomes the life-saver that is thrown to him, or as a helpless man under attack from ruthless enemies welcomes weapons! Amen. So be it!

Your fervent suppliant unto God,

✠ Ephraim, Metropolitan of Boston

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Great Lent, 2008

*Also a pamphlet entitled *The Church's Most Ascetical Book*. It is available from St. Philaret's House in Roslindale, MA. You can call (617) 323-6379 or email vikkif@homb.org.

Saint Paul's Fellowship of Labor Visits Guatemala

By Demetri Patitsas

Through the prayers of St. Xenia and our fellow Orthodox Christians of St. Xenia Parish, St. Paul's Fellowship of Labor made its debut safely to Guatemala City for a week of fellowship, liturgy, and labor. Fifteen pilgrims from the US and Canada arrived in Guatemala on February 2nd. They spent a week turning the recently purchased parish building into a holy Orthodox Church by knocking down walls, building an iconostasis, pouring cement, mounting icons, painting, and gardening. St. Paul's Fellowship of Labor teamed up with their brothers and sisters in Christ of Guatemala for a spiritually profitable and labor intensive week of service—not to mention a baptism and a trip to Lago Atitlan, known as “the most beautiful place in the world!”

The program was opened on Sunday with a liturgy served in Spanish by His Grace, Bishop Demetrios and chanted by Deacon Christos from Pillars of Orthodoxy Church in Carlisle, PA. Deacon Cyril and the parishioners of Guatemala welcomed the pilgrims as their own family. The SPFL crew was humbled by the parishioners' devotion to the Faith; some travel over two hours for services.

The entire week was one of instruction, not only for the parishioners, but also for the SPFL crew. Whether during vespers services, liturgies, or the all-night vigil for the feast of St. Xenia, the Guatemalans and the SPFL visitors worked side by side, struggling in the faith, and learning from one another.

Following the liturgy, SPFL program leader Demetri Patitsas from the Three Pillars parish opened the week with introductions and greetings from the faithful, goals for the week, and a description of the adventure to Lago Atitlan. Shortly after the meal, Bishop Demetrios held a parish meeting and gave a talk on the practicalities of the Orthodox Faith. He commented, “We are in a country that has not seen the light of Orthodoxy. Now that

we have a building, the light is set up on a mountain! Our Faith is surely a missionary Faith and that light will attract those who sincerely wish to worship God in spirit and in truth.” Fr. Ihnat from St. Nectarios Church in Seattle then led a discussion with the parishioners of St. Xenia and the SPFL group concerning Orthodoxy through the ages. After warm greetings from the parishioners, the SPFL group returned to their accommodations in Zona 1 at a famous Guatemalan hotel called the PanAmerican.

Evenings were spent at the Guatemala hotel eating at a pilgrim's Thanksgiving table, where all 15 SPFL members sampled from the authentic cuisine of Guatemala: *tomalles*, *pescado* [fish], *carne* [meat], and other delicious dishes. Each evening meal was followed by discussion led by the clergy.

Throughout the week, they were transported in the blessed SPFL van. The travels around Guatemala City were accompanied by hymns to the saints, stories, and laughter. Victor, a native-born Guatemalan and parishioner of St. Cosmas Church in D.C., served as the expert “conductor” for the week and assured everyone's safe arrival to and from our hotel and the church.

Mornings began with prayers, a full breakfast of *huevos* [eggs], *queso* [cheese], and *fritas negras* [black beans], followed by work projects at the church. Lunch was always prepared by Crisoula and Melpomeni (Bishop Demetrios' mother and aunt and also the Greek *Yia-yias* for the week). The afternoon labor always had brief interruptions by hundreds of local school children who on their way home for lunch would visit the church to get candies and sweets from SPFL participants John Farnsworth from Pillars of Orthodoxy and Zachary Graves from the Orthodox Church of St. John the Confessor in Ipswich, MA. John and Zach even taught them how to do their cross!

As the week progressed, the building began to be



Laborers hard at work on St. Xenia's Church

transformed. Under the guidance of Michael Salemi of St. Tatiana's Parish in New York, Bishop Demetrios' cousin Chris Giantsopoulos of St. Joseph Parish in North York, and Uncle Miltiadis of St Nectarios Parish in Toronto, the project progressed and the shell of a structure took form. In the end, whether it was a full coat of paint compliments of Peter

Bogdonis of St. Joseph's Parish, or a chanter's stand built by Nicholas Barboutis, each volunteer contributed in some way to the glory of our holy Orthodoxy.

Following the week of labor, the group took a scenic tour to Lago Atitlan where Guatemalan catechumen, Antonio, was baptized in a natural baptismal font formed at the base of three enormous active volcanoes and a clear fresh water lake.

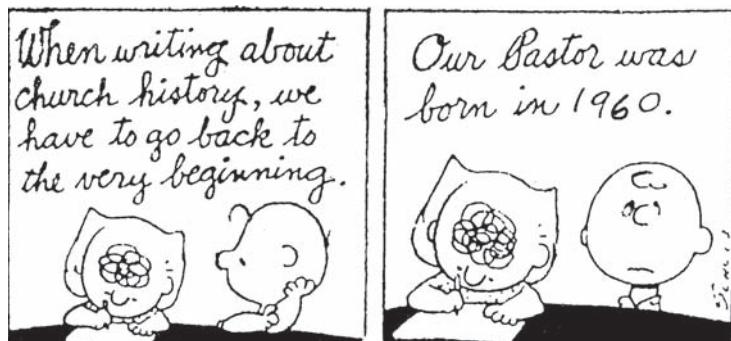
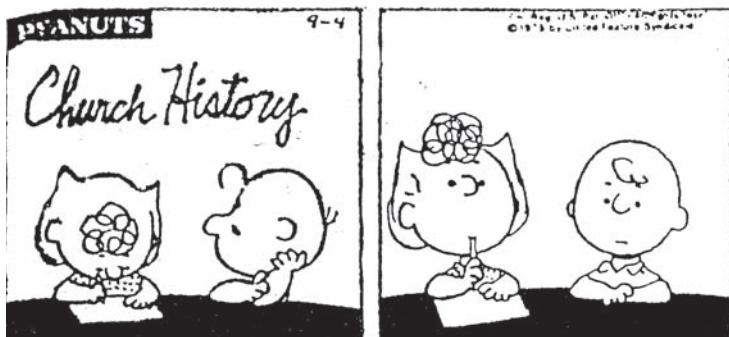


Bishop Demetrios performing a baptism at Lago Atitlan

Finishing with a hierarchical liturgy sung by Demetri Antonopoulos of St. Mark's in Roslindale, the parishioners shared one last service and meal together before wishing the visiting group farewell. Tears and good-bye hugs were shared by all as SPFL's first trip to St. Xenia Parish in Guatemala came to a close; but rest assured, this won't be the last!

St. Paul's Fellowship of Labor www.thespfl.org is a non-profit organization that serves the parishes,

convents, and monasteries of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America. Next year's trip to Guatemala will run from January 31st to February 8th, 2009. Please send your support to the attention of SPFL Chair, Demetri Patitsas, by emailing djmpatitsas@gmail.com or calling (814) 386-5254.



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St. Xenia Camp 2008 August 17-23 (n.s.)

You may visit
www.homb.org/stxeniacamp
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other volunteer
and counselor recruitment

Registrations will not be accepted
after June 30

Please register early

Father Photios Cooper Ordained to the Priesthood

By John Presson



Metropolitan Moses, clergy and servers at Fr. Photios' ordination to the priesthood

Congratulations are due to Father Photios Cooper who was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on the Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas, March 10/23, 2008. His Eminence Metropolitan Moses was the celebrant and ordaining hierarch, assisted by Cathedral Proistámenos Fr. Constantine Parr, Deacon George Psaromatis, Subdeacon Gregory Moshnin of SS. Peter and Paul Mission in Tucson, Cathedral Ecclesiarch James Kalbaski, and the Cathedral chanters directed by Metropolis Protopsaltis John Presson. We also congratulate the new presbyter's family.

Fr. Photios will serve as assistant priest at the Cathedral Parish.

Future Trips with St. Paul's Fellowship of Labor

Holy Theotokos Convent, Newmarket: July 26–August 1, 2008

New England Tour: August 2008

St. Andrew's-by-the Sea, Bahamas: Dec. 25, 2008–Jan. 4, 2009

Convent of the Meeting of the Lord, Stanwood, WA: Dec. 26, '08–Jan. 2, '09

St. Xenia Parish, Guatemala: January 31–February 8, 2009

St. Peter and Paul Mission Parish, Tucson, AZ: March 2009

St. Gregory of Sinai Monastery, Kelseyville, CA: March 2009

Mission Parish of Saint Philaret the New Confessor, Metropolitan of New York

From all of us at Saint Philaret Mission in Chicopee, MA,
we greet you with Christian love and pray that you are all well
and living in the peace of our Sweet Saviour Jesus Christ!

Glory to Thee our God,
Glory be to Thee!

First, we wish to thank His Eminence Metropolitan Ephraim for his prayers, his blessing, and his encouraging motivation for us poor ones here. Your loving presence is always felt here with us as our Living Icon of Christ our God! We bow before you and, kissing your right hand, ask that through your holy prayers, you beseech our God to, “look down from heaven and perfect this vine which Thy right hand hath planted!”

It was soon after the Glorification of the New Confessor Saint Philaret, the weekend of May 19-20, 2001, (NS), that our mission parish was originally established. This was decided in the House Chapel (dedicated to Saint George) of Father Peter and Matushka Dionysia Farnsworth.

It was after Liturgy one day that Fr. Peter Farnsworth announced that His Eminence Metropolitan Ephraim had recommended that we consider naming the new mission after Saint Philaret. Immediately after the announcement, all the candles that were lit united as a single flame that took us by surprise! One of the women present said that this may be the confirmation of our new Patron Saint. And so it is today!

Fr. Peter and Matushka Dee graciously and diligently served the small community of faithful, holding the full cycle of services. We will never forget that tiny little grace-filled chapel! As a memorial, we have preserved the altar Fr. Peter made and use it here at Saint Philaret's!

In May of 2003, Subdeacon Jacob Wojcik was elevated to the Diaconate and began learning to serve. It was early in 2005 that Fr. Peter was transferred to Pillars of Orthodoxy Parish in Carlisle, PA. Deacon Jacob was then asked to move the mission from Worcester and establish it in Western Massachusetts. After moving from one temporary rented room to another for the next year, a suitable location was found to rent at our present location in the basement (catacomb) of a Days Inn Hotel office park. We are in Chicopee, MA immediately off Exit 5 on the Massachusetts Turnpike just outside the city of Springfield. This area is a perfect location for those traveling, as we are at the crossroads of

North/South and East/West Interstates of Routes 90 and 91. Visitors always say they forget that they are in a “hotel” once they come through the door of the chapel!

The chapel has almost everything we need, but little by little we are acquiring the remaining tools needed for the services. The chapel, more so each week, becomes a comforting place, filled with the grace of God, with many icons, service books, and supplies donated by the generosity of Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Holy Nativity Convent, our own parishioners, and anonymous donors. We can feel the support of our Orthodox fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters, especially through their prayers for us.

Though our mission consists only of twelve families which total thirty-seven faithful, we are blessed to be able to sustain ourselves. We have three grandmothers that have a living Orthodox tradition which is so beneficial for us. We are blessed with dedicated parents, and we are blessed with young teens and children for our future. Our families come from the three states of New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. The longest commuting time is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Our youngest child Ezekiel is not quite a year old and *Yiá-yia* Cassandra is 97! For those of you who do not know *Yiá-yia*, you may know her by her handiwork of crocheting the black and white blankets at all our monasteries and convents. She likes to keep everyone warm! Up until a few months ago she was still able to make it to church. Just recently she had a fall, and this has kept her from coming. Please pray for her!

Deacon Jacob is here on Saturday evening for Vespers and each Sunday for Reader's Service. We have been blessed by Metropolitan Ephraim to retain reserve Holy Communion for the Reader's Service and to serve the sick and elderly of our parish. During the service on Sunday, we usually read a sermon from Saint Philaret, Archbishop Andrei, or a reading from one of the lives of the Saints.

We thank His Grace Bishop Demetrios for his love and prayers, his regular visits, and for coordinating the schedule of our other visiting clergy. We are very thank-

ful for the service of Fr. Dimitry Kukunov, his Matushka Tatiana and their family, as well as the kindness of Fr. John Fleser and the faithful of Saint Anna's Parish for sharing Fr. Dimitry with us! Father has a great love for Saint Philaret and for us. When Father cannot serve, Abbot Papa Isaac at the Monastery has always been generous in sending us one of his fine priestmonks.

Visits from local clergy in addition to those already mentioned include our Elder and Founder, Archimandrite Panteleimon, Archimandrite Isaac; Priestmonks Theodore, Parthenius, Ignatius, Job (from the Ukraine); Priests Fr. George Kochergin, Fr. Peter Farnsworth, Fr. John Routos; Archdeacon Andrew; and Fr. Deacon Jacob's beloved Godson, Monk Samuel, Subdeacon.

Since we are within a one and a half hour ride from the Boston Metropolis, we have the great fortune of having many different clergy serving us, and we benefit by hearing the latest news and the progress of missionary work throughout the world.

We ask you to please remember us in your holy prayers here at Saint Philaret's Mission. Pray that we may lead by example. Please pray for our growth in membership, that others may be saved from the deception of this world. For outreach we have a website at www.saintphilaret.org under construction, and some "Orthodox Church, Heaven on Earth" pamphlets, printed with our contact information for inquiries, which are available outside our Chapel.

With God's mercy, His help, and our fervent prayers and labor, others will follow (some have inquired already) and ultimately, we hope to purchase a piece of property, build a holy temple, and become a more visible witness in our area to the service of God, and a witness to the purity of our Holy Orthodox Christian Faith!

Thy Holy Will be done, O Lord! Amen.

Deacon Jacob can be reached at frjacobw@hughes.net



Bishop Demetrios, the clergy and parishioners at St. Philaret's Mission Parish on the Third Sunday of Lent, 2008

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Intelligent Design vs. Evolutionism

Darwinian evolution supporters continue to successfully push their agenda in the media as well as in our children's public schools and colleges. You may ask yourself, what tools are available to educate oneself on this issue to intelligently refute those supporting this atheistic agenda?

There are four (4) excellent DVDs available that explain in laymen's language the documented scientific truth about Intelligent Design:

- Icons of Evolution*
- The Privileged Planet*
- The Case for a Creator*
- Unlocking the Mystery of Life*

These DVDs normally retail for \$19.95 each but St. Nectarios Press has them available now for \$15.00. Please see their web site www.orthodoxpress.org or call 1-800-643-4233.

Another DVD you should see with your family is:

Rediscovering God in America—The truth about our Founding Fathers' attitude toward religion, and its role in our society. *Rediscovering God in America* can be purchased online at:

http://www.conservativedvds.com/products/BookPage.asp?prod_cd=c6774

Order yours today!

The Troublemaker

From *How to Forgive... When You Don't Feel Like It*
by June Hunt

The dust rises in a thick cloud around the angry crowd stomping through the streets. Emotions are heated, tempers flare to a fever pitch.

Shouts of "Stone her! Stone her!" echo off the rock streets and stone walls. At the front of the mob, a frightened, frantic woman trembles. Her faint cries for mercy are drowned out by the demanding voices around her insisting on justice.

But justice isn't all this crowd wants. They plan to use this woman to set a trap for the troublemaker, the Jewish teacher known as Jesus. His radical message of forgiveness and mercy is about to be put to the test.

The mob finally reaches the place at the temple where Jesus is teaching. The woman's captors thrust her before Him. The accusers encircle them both like a pack of snarling wolves.

These scribes and Pharisees publicly announce the charge against her: "Adultery—caught in the very act!" Only one outcome is possible: death by stoning. The law literally requires it. "What do you say?" demand the religious rulers, daring Jesus to refute the law and thereby condemn Himself.

The Teacher says nothing. He stays seated. Then, bending over, He writes in the dirt with His finger.

These self-righteous rulers—confident that the law

is on their side—press Him again. "She was caught in adultery, in the very act! What do you say?"

Finally, Jesus speaks with a calm knowing: "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."

Bending down again, He continues writing in the dirt.

No one moves. Moments pass. The very ones so eager to stone the woman slither away one by one* until she is left alone with Jesus.

Now He stands up and asks with no hint of judgment, "Where are your accusers? Did no one condemn you?"

"No one, Lord," she answers.

"Neither do I condemn you." His voice is filled with compassion. "Go and sin no more."

This adulterous woman, who moments before knew she was destined to die, now finds herself totally free—free *only* because of forgiveness.

Facing certain death from the rock throwers, she received refuge...

*"Slither away one by one"—what an appropriate phrase! According to some commentators, when our Saviour was writing in the earth, He was identifying the sins of each of the would-be stone throwers.

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**Pillars of Orthodoxy Church
350 W. Old York Rd (Rt. 174 W)
Carlisle, PA
35th Anniversary Celebration
November 7-9, 2008**

The parish of Sts. Photios the Great, Gregory Palamas and Mark of Ephesus, the Pillars of Orthodoxy in Carlisle, PA. invite you to the celebration of their 35th Anniversary, the blessing of the new addition to their church and the namesday celebration of His Grace Bishop Demetrios of Carlisle on the weekend of November 7, 8 and 9, 2008.

Events planned for the celebration will include the Vigil of the Feast of the Great Martyr Demetrios on Friday evening, the Festal Liturgy of the Saint on Saturday followed by meals, snacks and two lectures on topics to be announced. The day will conclude with the Great Vespers for the Resurrection.

Sunday will begin with Orthros, the meeting of the hierarchs and the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. A festive trapeza including a pig roast will follow. An Open House for the community will be held on Sunday afternoon concluding with a lecture on the theme of the Temple of God and the worship of the Church. We will greet the evening with Vespers for our beloved Father and Confessor St. Philaret of New York and end our celebration with the Holy Liturgy on Monday morning.

Rooms have been blocked off at Carlisle's Sleep Inn. If you call the hotel at (717) 249-8863 and book under Pillars of Orthodoxy, you can get the special rate of \$63.99 single or double occupancy.

We pray that many of our brethren will join us for the blessings of this joyous celebration.

Report From the Bahamas, 2008

It was my joy and privilege once again to travel to the Bahamas, this time with my daughter Alexandra and her friend, Leo Ahlin.

We arrived in Nassau late on January 4. The next day we met with Nerissa Maillis who took us on a tour of the wonderful aquarium at the Atlantis resort, Paradise Island. We carefully avoided the casinos!

On Sunday, January 6, we caught the Bahamasair flight to the Maillis home on beautiful Long Island, 200 miles south of Nassau. We arrived in time for an early supper, and began the services for Nativity at 10 p.m. We were very impressed with the strong and heartfelt chanting—it is obvious that the Maillis family makes good use of the little chapel of St. Andrew's-by-the Sea!

A joyous repast was celebrated after the Nativity Liturgy. Then we all took a much needed rest and reassembled at 4:00 p.m. for a Christmas dinner, replete with turkey, trimmings, and freshly caught lobster. At the end of this wonderful evening Compline was chanted, and we repaired to the beach house down the road which Leo had rented.

After four happy days of sight-seeing, swimming, boating and fishing, Alex and Leo took their reluctant departure for Toronto on January 12, leaving me as sole occupant of the beach house for three days. Having served Saturday Vespers and Sunday Liturgy (at which Anthony Maillis' fiancee was made a catechumen), I had a two-day retreat; time for reading, and a daily hike up the long and lonely beach. The beach house rental expired on Tuesday the 15th, so I moved up to the Maillis home for the remaining week and was happy to sleep on the floor of the chapel.

On Sunday, January 13, Nick and Anthony Maillis met with representatives of the BBC who were documenting the wrecks of British vessels in the Bahamas. They went out to see the wreck of the frigate "Northampton." This ship had a captured American vessel in tow, when they were grounded on a reef later called "Northampton Reef" after the wreck. No loss of life was recorded when these ships went aground in 1812. I look forward to the airing of the documentary.

The following Wednesday, after packing a picnic lunch, we took a 50 mile trip to the northern end of Long Island, the second landing site (after San Salvador) of Christopher Columbus in the New World. Several churches of Fr. Jerome Hawes, the famous architect and "Hermit of Cat Island" were visited on the way. One of these, at The Bight, is now totally roofless, but the lines of Fr. Jerome's architecture are still much in evidence. On the return trip we visited Deans. At 675 feet it is the deepest "blue hole" in the world.

The services of Holy Theophany (at which we remembered Jeremy Burrows who was baptized that day at St. Joseph of Arimathea Orthodox Church in North York, Ontario), were celebrated in the chapel on Friday evening

and Saturday morning and concluded with the Great Blessing of Water. Then, following a procession, there was another Great Blessing of Water at the seaside. The cross was thrown into the sea and retrieved by Theron Maillis.

I took my leave of beautiful Long Island on Monday January 21, after a pastoral visit of almost three weeks which included

Nativity, Theophany, and the Sundays following each. Fr. Jerome came to Long Island in 1909 and built the beautiful St. Paul's Anglican Church, returning in 1939 to build the equally beautiful St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church. While I can never hope to fill the shoes of the "Hermit of Cat Island," at least I know that the fullness of the Christian Faith, Holy Orthodoxy, has been planted, nourished, and is blooming at St. Andrew's-by-the Sea.

The proceeds of the sale of the very attractively produced Bahamian Calendar pays my way to the Bahamas each year, and I pray that all the members of our Church will purchase one or more (they make beautiful Christmas gifts!) so that the Orthodox Long Islanders may continue to be served by a priest at least once a year.

Father David Belden



Blessing the water at Theophany



About Our Logo A Divine Confirmation

The cross on our masthead commemorates the miraculous appearance of the sign of the Cross near Athens on Sept. 14 (according to the traditional Orthodox calendar) in 1925. Anti-Orthodox and secularist forces in power in Greece, together with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, had forced the changing of the traditional church calendar in 1924 as a first step toward uniting with the heterodox churches of the West. Shining in the evening sky on the traditional feast day of the Exaltation of the Cross, this extraordinary appearance of the Cross is a divine confirmation of Holy Tradition in the Orthodox Church and of the calendar as one facet of Holy Tradition.

The Faithful Steward is the official newsletter of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America. Under the editorship of Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston, *The Faithful Steward* appears three times yearly, and is delivered free of charge to the faithful of the Holy Metropolis of Boston. For others, a donation of \$1.75 an issue is requested.

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“Every good giving and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17). The perfect gift is the one that only membership in the Church can give: the knowledge of true worship and the grace of the Holy Mysteries. But our era suffers from a famine of truth and the true worship of God. In our weak way, we try to feed those who hunger for God. Your prayers and your donations help the Church in this awe-inspiring ministry. Another way to help is to make a bequest to the Church in your will. Remember that God loves a cheerful giver. Also remember that *The Faithful Steward*, although delivered free of charge to all members of our Church, is in need of your support.



The Faithful Steward

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